

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SCA-01 EB-07 STR-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /105 W

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R 202119Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3195

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

ACONSUL BELIZE 1072

AMEMBASSYLONDON

USUN 485

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 6561

SAN JOSE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR GT MX BH

SUBJECT: MEXICAN PRESIDENT-ELECT REITERATES INTEREST IN PARTICIP-
ATING IN FINAL BELIZE-GUATEMALA SETTLEMENT

REF: 75 GUATEMALA 6429

SUMMARY: LOPEZ PORTILLO ECHOED ECHEVERRIA'S POSITION ON
BELIZE - THAT MEXICO HAS A POTENTIAL CLAIM, WISHES PARTICIPATE
IN FINAL SETTLEMENT, AND BELIEVES IN SELF-DETERMINATION OF
PEOPLE OF BELIZE - BUT FACT THAT GUATEMALA HAD HEARD IT ALL
BEFORE CONTRIBUTED TO MATTER-OF-FACT REACTION IN GUATEMALA.
LOPEZ ALSO COMMENTED ON MEXICO-US PRISONER EXCHANGE AND TRADE
IMBALANCE, AND ON MEXICO'S MONETARY CRISIS, GUERRILLA ACTIVIITY,
RELATIONS WITH SPAIN, AND BIRTH CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

1. MEXICAN PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ PORTILLO TOOK A

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POSITION ON BELIZE AT PRESS CONFERENCE SHORTLY BEFORE

ENDING HIS VISIT TO GUATEMALA SEPTEMBER 17 THAT WAS IDENTICAL TO THAT TAKEN BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERLRA ON EARLIER VISIT (REFTEL). UNLIKE ECHEVERRIA'S STATEMENTS, HOWEVER, LOPEZ' CAME AS NO SURPRISE, AND GUATEMALAN REACTION SO FAR APPEARS CALM.

2. ACCORDING PRESS ACCOUNTS, LOPEZ SAID IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, "THIS IS THE MOST DELICATE ASPECT OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND GUATEMALA, THE ONLY ASPECT THAT, PAINFULLY, SEPARATES US AND ONE THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE DISAPPEAR SOON. FOR GUATEMALA THE PROBLEM OF BELIZE IS OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE AND ON OCCASIONS IT IS, I FEEL, ONE OF THE TIES THAT BINDS TOGETHER YOUR NATIONAL SOLIDARITY. FOR MEXICO IT IS A PROBLEM OF PRINCIPLES IN WHICH IT BELIEVES: PRINCIPLES SUCH AS SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES, THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF CONTROVERSIES, THE CONSTANT EFFORT TO RESOLVE ALL QUESTIONS IN CONFORMITY WITH LAW. THE SITUATION ALSO AFFECTS THE BELIZEANS, AND FOR THEM IT IS NOT A PROBLEM OF PRINCIPLES BUT OF SURVIVAL. (SIMPLY) BECAUSE THE BELIZEANS ARE QUANTITATEVELY FEW DOES NOT MEAN THEY NEED BE LEFT OUT OF CONSIDERATION AND NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE DECISIONS.

3. "I RECOGNIZE THAT GUATEMALA HAS RIGHTS OVER THAT TERRITORY (BELIZE), BUT I RECOGNIZE THAT MEXICO ALSO COULD ASSERT RIGHTS, WHICH IT CANNOT RENOUNCEBOTH AS

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE AND BECAUSE ITS LEGAL SYSTEM PREVENTS IT FROM DOING SO. NEVERTHELE4SS,MEXICO) CAN ASSURE YOU THAT IT WILL NEVERHANDLE THE MATTER (IN SUCH A WAY AS TOBRINGABOUT) CONFRONTATION AND THAT IN ANY EVENT IT WILL SEEK A FRIENDLY SOLUTION. WHAT IS NECESSARY IS TO LOOK FORNEGOTIATED AND INTELLIGENT SOLUTION FOR SO PAINFUL A SITUATION.

4. "JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO," HE CONTINUED, "WOULD LIKE TO TURN OVER TO GUATEMALA THE RIGHTS OF MEXICO OVER BELIZE, BUT THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO CAN'T DO IT,BECAUSE ITS LAWS AND ITS CONSTITUTION PROHIBIT IT. BUT I CAN UNCLASSIFIED

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STATE THAT THIS POSITION DOES NOT INVOLVE AMBITION FOR TERRITORY OR PLUNDER, BUT ONLY A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLES. WE DO NOT TRUST AS MUCH IN THE HISTORIAN AS IN THE NEGOTIATORS, SINCE BY THEIR MEANS ONE CAN ARRIVE AT A DEFINITIVE SOLUTION IN CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY TERMS.

5. "AND THE TALKS WITH ENGLAND IN WHICH GUATEMALA IS ENGAGEDDEMONSTRATE THAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARED

THAT GOAL. AND WE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME (IN SU
OPORTUNIDAD Y CASO) WILL ALSO PARTICIPATE IN ACCORDANCE
WITH INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND LAWS, IN ORDER TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM.

6. OTHER SUBJECTS. LOPEZ WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THE
IDEA THAT MEXICAN PRISONERS IN US AND AMERICAN
PRISONERS IN MEXICO BE INCLUDED IN SOME TYPE OF
EXCHANGE SEEMED "FEASIBLE), ACCORDING TO
ONE PAPER, AND "INTELLIGENT" ACCORDING TO ANOTHER,
SINCE IN THAT WAY FRICTIONS AND IRRITATIONS WOULD BE
AVOIDED AND THE CORDIALITY AND GOOD RELATION THAT
OUGHT TO EXIST BETWEEN NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES WOULD BE
MAINTAINED. POSSIBLE FORMULAS FOR THE EXCHANGE
BE STUDIED.

7. ASKED ABOUT THE UNFAVORABLE TRADE BALANCE BETWEEN
GUATEMALA AND MEXICO, WHICH ACCORDING TO ONE PAPER IS
RUNNING FIVE-TO-ONE IN MEXICO'S FAVOR, LOPEZ IS QUOTED
AS SAYING WHAT GUATEMALA DESIRES FROM MEXICO, MEXICO
DESIRES FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND FOR THAT REASON
MEXICO UNDERSTANDS PERFECTLY THE GUATEMALAN POSITION,
SINCE IT IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE MEXICAN ONE VIS-A-
VIS THE US. MEXICO IS COMPLETELY RESOLVED TO CORRECT
THE IMBALANCE WITH RESPECT GUATEMALA IF ADEQUATE
MECHANISMS CAN BE FOUND.

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SAN JOSE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

8. COMMENTING ON DEVALUATION OF PESO, LOPEZ SAID
"MEXICO IS GOING THROUGH A CRISIS, BUT NOT A
CATASTROPHE," DENYING THAT ANY CONSIDERATION BEING
GIVEN TO NATIONALIZING BANKS OR FREEZING BANK ACCOUNTS.
"THOSE ARE RUMORS THAT ARE POISONING US, AND THAT
SHOW US JUST HOW FAR A FRIGHTENED SOCIETY CAN LOSE
ITS CREDIBILITY." ASKED ABOUT NEWSWEEK REPORT THAT
MEXICAN BUSINESSMEN ARE OPPOSED TO "LEFTIST" POLICIES
OF ECHEVERRIA, LOPEZ SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THAT
ADJECTIVE, BUT HE DID ACCEPT THAT MEXICO IN THESE
MOMENTS NEEDS TO FIND SERENITY AND EQUILIBRIUM TO
OVERCOME THE PRESENT CRISIS. "THE BUSINESS SECTOR IN
MEXICO HAD GRAVE RESPONSIBILITIES...I TRUST THAT ALL
THE FORCES IN MEXICO WILL KNOW HOW TO COMPLY WITH
THEIR (RESPONSIBILITIES) TO OVERCOME THE CRISIS."

9. ASKED ABOUT GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN MEXICO, LOPEZ
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SAID IT DOESNTHAVE MUCH IMPORTANCE, "BUT ONE CANT
DENY THAT FOR SOME TIME NOW IT HAS BEEN A FACTOR IN
MEXICO (PESA YA EN LA REALIDAD MEXICANA), IT WILL BE
FACED WITH THE LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION AND THE FORCES
OF PUBLIC ORDER."

10. LOPEZ SAID "WE ARE CLOSER THAN EVER" TO RENEWING
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. WHEN THE CONDITIONS
(PRESUMABLY IN SPAIN) EXIST THAT HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY
INDICATED AS NECESSARY FROM POINT OF VIEW OF A
DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, RELATIONS WILL BE RENEWED "WITH HER
WHO IS THE COMMON MOTHER OF GUATEMALA, OF MEXICO AND
OF THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA. I PERSONALLY HAVE A
STRONG DESIRE THAT THAT MOMENT COMES. IN 160 YEARS
OF INDEPENDENCE, WE HAVE BEEN IMPEDED FOR 40 FROM
HAVING RELATIONS, WHICH WE WISH TO RENEW IN ORDER TO
RETURN TO NORMALITY.

11. ASKED ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL, LOPEZ SAID THERE WAS A
QUANTITATIVE PROBLEM AND ALSO A QUALITATIVE ONE, I.E.,
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POPULATION FROM RURAL TO

URBAN. CLEARLY WE HAVE TO ACT TO CONTROL A DISPROPORTIONATE INCREASE IN THE POPULATION. MEXICAN LAWS GIVE US THE TOOLS TO ACHIEVE RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD, AND OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED ALONG THAT LINE.

12. EDITORIAL COMMENT. ONLY COMMENT SO FAR IN GRAFICO (SEPTEMBER 18) AND NACION (SEPTEMBER 19). GRAFICO SAID "LOPEZ PORTILLO SPOKE A GREAT TRUTH WHEN HE SAID THAT WITH REGARD TO BELIZE ONE SHOULD TRUST NOT IN THE HISTORIANS BUT IN THE NEGOTIATORS. EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT ANOTHER FORM OF TRYING TO RECOVER THE TERRITORY WILL NOT GIVE RESULTS. WE WERE WITNESSES LAST YEAR TO A DISPLAY OF POWER BY THE BRITISH IN SENDING TO BELIZEAN TERRITORY MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TROOPS TO PREVENT AN ATTEMPTED INVASION BY OUR COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO THE FEARS EXPRESSED BY PREMIER PRICE. IT WAS A USELESS DISPLAY THAT ONLY PUT IN DANGER THE SECURITY OF THE HEMISPHERE BY THE PRESENCE OF EXTRA-HEMISPHERIC TROOPS ON AMERICAN TERRITORY. THE BATTLE OF BELIZE MUST BE WON BY MEANS OF NEGOTIATIONS, UNCLASSIFIED

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AND THE FIRST STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN THE CONVERSATIONS ...THAT WILL CONTINUE SEPTEMBER 21-22 IN PANAMA."

13. NACION COMMENTED THAT LOPEZ' DECLARATIONS "HAVE THE VIRTUE OF BEING CLEAR, OPEN, AND CONCRETE, WHICH IS NOTABLY DIFFERENT FROM THE CONTRADICTIONS... ARTIFICIAL GAMES AND DIALECTICAL JUGGLING OF ECHEVERRIA." NEVERTHELESS, MEXICO APPEARS ESPOUSE SELF-DETERMINATION IN SOME CASES BUT NOT OTHERS, E.G., SPAIN, CHILE, ANGOLA, AND ISRAEL. NACION ALSO OBSERVED THAT MAIN PURPOSE OF LOPEZ' TRAVELS WAS "THE STRENGTHENING OF AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND MEXICO, WITH THE APPARENT PURPOSE OF ASSUMING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DOMOCRACIES OF THE REGION (AND) PRESENTING A COMMON FRONT TO THE US. "STOPS IN GUATEMALA AND COSTA RICA WERE SIMPLY TO MAKE THE MEXICAN - VENEZUELAN TALKS LESS OBVIOUS AND LESS IRRITATING FOR THE US. ANDREWS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GUATEM06561
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760355-0580
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760942/aaaabjuz.tel
Line Count: 268
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 GUATEMALA 6429
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vandyklc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 FEB 2004 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2004 by vandyklc>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEXICAN PRESIDENT-ELECT REITERATES INTEREST IN PARTICIP- ATING IN FINAL BELIZE-GUATEMALA SETTLEMENT
TAGS: PBOR, GT, MX, BH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006